

Radio Journal: International Studies in Broadcast & Audio Media



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Call for Papers: Competing Sounds? Podcasting and Popular Music (20.1, May 2022)

Abstract deadline: **20 Jan 2021**

Guest editors: Ellis Jones, University of Oslo; Jeremy W. Morris, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

On 19 May 2020, Spotify announced they had secured worldwide rights to distribute *The Joe Rogan Show* – arguably the world's most commercially successful podcast – exclusively through their streaming platform. This move, reportedly worth over \$100m, follows a series of notable licensing deals and acquisitions by Spotify (e.g. Gimlet Media, Anchor, The Obamas, etc.). But the heavy investment in this emerging media format also puts podcasts and music in economic and cultural tension. Noting the paltry royalties Spotify distributes to musicians, jazz historian Ted Gioja scoffed that the Rogan deal shows 'Spotify values Rogan more than any musician in the history of the world.'

So, while academic literature has positioned podcasts in relation to radio as the format they most resemble, outside of academia it is music and podcasts that are more frequently presented as in competition for listeners' attention, and as generating different listening practices and distinct sets of socio-cultural values. This special issue seeks to put these two competing and complementary formats in dialogue. Topics for articles might include:

- **Music and podcasts as participatory media.** As a 'home recording' project, podcasting has potential parallels with the long history of 'DIY' and 'alternative' music production. What is the significance of being a 'home' podcaster, in relation to these politicised lineages of music production?
- **Identity and political 'voice'.** Podcasts are accessible and ubiquitous, but some early structural features that made it a popular practice for white, educated men still persist. Who can speak through these different forms? How do music and spoken word give voice to different communities, and particular forms of expertise?
- **Functions and uses.** Recorded music and podcasts are distinct formats, yet they occupy similar roles in people's lives: soundtracking commutes, chores, exercise, etc. How do music and podcasts compare as forms of 'time' or 'mood' management?




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- **Music, podcasts, and well-being.** How do music and podcasts provide similar or different experiences of comfort, immersion or distraction? Why are podcasts (more than music) categorized as habitual listening, or as addictive binge-listening?
- **Platformization.** What are the consequences of Spotify's moves away from the open ecosystem podcasting was built on, and what can popular music learn from such changes? What is the relationship of music and podcasts to corporate surveillance and data capture? How has platformization placed pressures on the form, content, and structure of music and podcasts?
- **Music in podcasts.** Podcasts have not (yet) integrated the playback and publicizing of popular music in the same way that radio has, largely due to licensing issues. How might this change in the streaming era? How have licensing issues led to other uses of music in podcasts? How have musicians used podcasts to build audiences and develop alternative revenues amidst a purported 'value gap' in music streaming?

Please send abstracts (200-300 words) and short bio to podcastingandpopularmusic@gmail.com by **Wednesday 20th January 2021**. Completed commissioned articles (~7,000 words) will be due by **1 August 2021**.

Authors selected for the special issue will also be invited to participate in a conference panel at the upcoming IAMRC conference (July 2021), in the **Music, Audio, Radio and Sound working group**, where they can share and comment on drafts of their works in progress.




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